

Career in Sustainability and Energy Management

The Energy Managers Association aims to encourage and enable more professionals to enter the world of energy management and environmental roles.

The EMA has taken on a challenge of changing the perception of energy management, by raising the sector's profile and sharing its members' – leading energy management professionals - insights into their career progress and achievements. In this issue, we have asked Faye Hargreaves, EMEA Sustainability Coordinator at Oracle about her career in energy management so far.

Faye Hargreaves, EMEA Sustainability Coordinator at Oracle



What attracted you into sustainability?

I've always been fascinated by the natural world, but my passion for protecting the environment truly started following an A-Level Geography field trip to Iceland where I ice-picked along one of the world's largest glaciers and learned of its decline.

I went on to study Geography at University and have since camped on an active volcano in Guatemala, snorkelled with sharks and manatees in Oman and Belize,

and learned about how the local people of Costa Rica are farming crops more sustainably to protect the untouched, primary forest and are being educated to understand the importance of re-establishing secondary forest in the area for future generations.

I feel frustrated knowing the damage the rapid increase in human population is causing on our fragile ecosystems and I want to be a part of the generation that influences positive change. Sustainability is such a broad topic that, whether you are interested in energy, waste, water, transport, biodiversity, wellness... the list goes on, there will be something that interests you. Not only that, but the environment also impacts every single one of us.

How has the pandemic affected your entry into the profession?

I actually started this role during the pandemic, back in July 2020 so therefore have never physically worked in the office with my team. Starting with the advantages -

with everything being virtual, there has been a great increase in the availability of digital communications and engagement, which I might not have explored, were we still in the office, for example organising and hosting webinars, recording a podcast and creating videos.

These have all enabled me to raise the profile of sustainability in a different way. Secondly, the reliability of zoom calls has meant that I have spoken regularly with colleagues from the other side of the world, which in the pre-pandemic world, I might not have met.

Video conferencing has boomed over the last year and I think that has done wonders for my network. Having said that, at the beginning I sometimes found it hard meeting new team members over zoom and trying to bring my personality across through the screen, as we are so used to meeting colleagues in the office. When you are starting a new role, this is something I have missed – that social interaction, which

maybe I took for granted before Covid.

Another slight disadvantage to starting a role during the pandemic and therefore working from home is, I sometimes find myself taking longer to pick things up. Being in the office, you would naturally pick things up much quicker, just from that elevator chat etc., which obviously you do not get at home.

To add onto this, not being in the office from a sustainability perspective has been difficult, for example when discussing lighting systems, heat pumps, cooling systems etc. and not being able to physically see the systems in place and learn from the local expert facilities teams.

However, this has also given us the opportunity to consider and plan a virtual sustainability audit where we will be looking at the sustainability initiatives of a building, via zoom, which I am very excited about!

What does your role entail?

As the Sustainability Coordinator for EMEA, I am responsible for supporting the Real Estate & Facilities Sustainability Manager EMEA in developing, implementing, monitoring and measuring a comprehensive sustainability program that incorporates sustainability into all aspects of RE&F EMEA operations.

We focus on energy, water and waste management as well as employee wellness. We aim to create comfortable, productive and sustainable environments for our employees to work in, whilst reducing the environmental impact

of our operations and improving the efficiency of the buildings.

A key part of my role is running the communications and engagement programme, which enables me to raise the profile of sustainability throughout Oracle. Through digital communications, I showcase all of the impressive sustainability initiatives we have implemented throughout our offices across EMEA.

What is your biggest achievement to date?

My manager and I created a *'Working from Home, Sustainability at Home'* guide for our colleagues to find out more on how to make sustainable choices, whilst working from home.

Although my role focuses on sustainability within the offices, now that we are all working from home, we have a duty to increase the sustainability awareness of our colleagues at home.

The guide covered different ways of implementing energy, water and waste saving initiatives at home, as well as what you can do to enhance local biodiversity and how you can travel in a more sustainable way. Initially, the objective of this project was for it to be shared throughout our team in EMEA, however it was so well received by the global sustainability team that it is now being made available to all Oracle colleagues globally.

I sit on the UK Green Team steering committee and have been carrying out initiatives and campaigns to drive sustainable action internally.

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One of our main goals is to increase awareness of the impact our actions can have on the environment.

The aggregate impact of all the initiatives we promote is reflected in the increase of employees that are engaging with sustainable content and seeking to take action to reduce their personal impact on the environment. I was delighted to be recognised as a Sustainability Champion for 2021 for my contribution the UK Green Team.

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How would you “sell” energy management/sustainability to those considering it as their career?

This industry is such an exciting, fast-paced space to be working in at the moment. We are seeing an ever-growing social pressure for businesses and governments to do more for sustainability, we welcome new environmental legislation and the push to net zero.

I also find energy procurement a very interesting area to work in, with a transition to renewable energy

and a push to carbon offsetting and carbon sinks, we are learning something new every single day.

What are your thoughts on the link between sustainability and energy management, and how do you expect these two disciplines to evolve in the future?

Energy management plays a key role within sustainability, it is a part of our everyday lives, we literally need it to survive, so managing this is key to becoming sustainable. We are also in the midst of a huge energy transition, from all the reliable, yet dirty fossil fuels to the ever-increasing impressive scope of renewable energy.

Sustainability has gathered so much momentum over the last year especially, with the continuous increase of new environmental legislation being established here in the UK, energy management and sustainability, in my opinion, will only ever become closer embedded.

Any recommendations to those coming into the sector at this current moment?

This role is my first in sustainability and having started it during the pandemic working remotely, there are definitely some missed

opportunities when it comes to learning about building management.

So, what I would recommend is where possible do external training courses to increase industry knowledge and network. I have completed two recently - the first was the Lead Environmental Auditor course by the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment to the ISO14001



accreditation. The next course was EMA's LEC 3 Fundamentals of Energy Management course. Both of these were hosted online and have given me a much greater understanding of what environmental management entails,

so I would highly recommend external training courses to those in a similar position.

Where do you see your future within the sustainability sector?

Within the next 5 years, I picture myself diving deeper into real estate sustainability. It is a very exciting area to be working in at the moment with the pandemic, the push to net zero and lots of new legislation coming in.

Working out how to manage these buildings efficiently when they reopen is going to be a welcomed challenge. It is exciting because the key step to sustainable buildings is all about enhancing the buildings we already have today, to increase their maximum sustainable potential and efficiency, not by building new futuristic buildings which we often come to picture in our minds when we think of what the world will look like in 2050.

Within the next 10 years, I would love to be a part of inventing and designing a new

piece of sustainable technology and hopefully running my own business. The scope for sustainability is huge and pretty much limitless. It is a very fast-paced industry, which is only going to get bigger and better, I hope.